United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General endorses joint appeal by UNHCR, UNICEF and WHO for humanitarian assistance to more than one million displaced persons in Yugoslavia; Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding talks to correspondents following tour of conflict-affected areas in Sarajevo.

+ Secretary-General asks his Special Representative in Cyprus, Oscar Camillion, and Alternate Representative, Gustave Feissel, to hold talks with both sides in Cyprus, as well as in Greece and in Turkey; will review situation with Security Council and decide how to proceed by June.

+ General Assembly decides to convene World Conference on Human Rights at Vienna in June 1993.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today endorsed the revised joint appeal for humanitarian assistance in Yugoslavia launched by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO). He urged the international community to contribute "urgently and generously" towards meeting the growing humanitarian needs of more than one million displaced persons in Yugoslavia.

In the statement issued at Headquarters, the Secretary-General said he was "increasingly alarmed over the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Yugoslavia, particularly in Bosnia-Herzegovina". The United Nations stood ready with the help of the international community, he said, to assist in alleviating the suffering of the affected population. He called upon all the parties to the conflict to urgently agree to a cease-fire in order to create the necessary conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance.

In related news, Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations Marrack Goulding arrived yesterday in Sarajevo for a series of meetings, including a meeting with President of Bosnia-Herzegovina Alija Izetbegovic, on the question of a possible United Nations role in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Following a tour of the conflict-affected areas of Sarajevo today, Mr. Goulding told correspondents at a press conference that he found it difficult to understand how the "human suffering and material damage" caused by "random shelling" in a largely civilian area could be justified. In reply to questions about the United Nations role in the region, he said there had to be "an agreement between the parties and the United Nations" before the dispatch of a peace-keeping operation would be considered. He noted that it would be "difficult to find a basis" for such an agreement.

The main role at the present time was being played by the European Community, both with regard to negotiating and monitoring the cease-fire. Mr. Goulding noted that the United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) had provided humanitarian support in the region over the last few weeks -- "getting people out of burning hospitals; sometimes providing armoured transport to move people around".

Earlier today, Mr. Goulding met separately with representatives of the Croatian party, the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) and the European Community. Following the press conference, he left Sarajevo for Belgrade where he was expected to meet with the head of the Serbian party, Radovan Karadzic.

Tomorrow, 7 May, Mr. Goulding is scheduled to leave Belgrade for Zagreb via eastern Slavonia for a visit at the installations of UNPROFOR. After meetings with Croatian officials in Zagreb, as well as officials of the UNHCR and the European Community Monitoring Mission, he will return to New York.

Meanwhile, in a letter to the President of the Security Council yesterday, the Deputy Representative of the United States to the United Nations, Alexander F. Watson, said "serious questions" had arisen regarding "whether the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is the continuation of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for purposes of membership in the United Nations". He said that until the question was resolved, the participation of the representatives of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the activities of the Council or the General Assembly "should be viewed as without prejudice to the disposition of these questions".
(S/23879)

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The Secretary-General has asked his Special Representative in Cyprus, Oscar Camillion, and the Alternate Representative, Gustave Feissel, to hold discussions with both sides in Cyprus, as well as in Greece and Turkey during the first half of May. According to a statement issued at Headquarters today, the Secretary-General will review the situation with members of the Security Council at the conclusion of these talks, and decide how to proceed by June. The Secretary-General's decision is in line with Security Council resolution 750 (1992) of 19 April.

(more)

Under that resolution, the Council decided to remain involved in the Cyprus question "on an ongoing and direct basis" and called on the Secretary-General to pursue his intensive efforts during May and June to complete the work on the outstanding issues of the set of ideas on an overall framework agreement on the Cyprus question.

In preparation for his renewed effort in Cyprus, the Secretary-General has asked his Special Representative to come to New York. In keeping with the Security Council's decision to become directly involved in support of the Secretary General's effort, his representatives have also discussed their forthcomming talks with the president of the Security Council, and other interested members of the Council.

The good offices mission of the Secretary-General in Cyprus was instituted by the Council in 1964. Four years later, the Secretary-General appointed his first Special Representative for the island.

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The General Assembly decided this morning to convene the World Conference on Human Rights at Vienna in June 1993. It took the action by adopting without a vote, a decision, orally amended, that changed the venue of the meeting from Berlin to Vienna.

Sponsored by Morroco, the decision followed a recommendation by the Preparatory Committee for the Conference that the General Assembly reopen consideration of the item on human rights questions, in light of Germany's withdrawal of its invitation to convene the Conference in Berlin.

Florian Krenkel (Austria), in confirming his country's invitation to host the conference, highlighted the importance his Government attached to human rights and the protection of fundamental freedoms. Mr. Krenkel added that Austria would provide excellent facilities to the conference to ensure a successful meeting.

Italy withdrew its preliminary offer to have the Conference take place in Venice.

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